



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Pacific Southwest Region
Division of Realty
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-1832
Sacramento, California 95825
(916) 414-6445

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/R8/RE

May 18, 2019

Board of Supervisors
Solano County
675 Texas Street, Suite 6500
Fairfield, California 94533

**Re: REQUEST FOR RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ADDITION OF APN 0067-020-030 TO
SAN PABLO BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Dear Board of Supervisors, Solano County:

At the suggestion of Senior Planner Ms. Nedzlene Ferrario I am sending you this information in the hope that you'll find it useful in evaluating and approving the addition of one property (APN 0067-020-030) to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (refuge).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) manages the refuge, which includes properties along the north shore of San Pablo Bay in Solano, Napa, and Sonoma Counties. In response to rapidly disappearing wetlands and its prime location within the Pacific Flyway, the refuge was created in 1974 to protect migratory birds, wetland habitat, and endangered species. The refuge and San Pablo Bay support the largest wintering population of canvasbacks on the west coast as well as help protect the California clapper rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse, both of which are state and federally listed endangered species. The refuge includes open bay, tidal marsh, mud flats, and wetland habitats.

Since its establishment 8,620 acres have been acquired for the refuge. Most of the land has been donated, some has been purchased using funds from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the old military base at Skaggs Island was transferred to the Service. The refuge also manages 11,200 acres under a lease from the State of California.

This proposal is to purchase one ownership comprising approximately 420 acres in Solano and Napa counties combined. Approximately 358 acres of this land is located in Solano County. The property has been in the ownership of the same two families for many decades. It had been used as a recreational property for duck hunting until several years ago. The families are now

interested in selling the property and would prefer that it continue to be used to protect and benefit wildlife. They've entered into a purchase agreement with the Service, presuming, since it lies within the refuge's approved boundary, that it will become part of the refuge.

The property is unique in that it was never "leveed off" and farmed and the soil structure has remained intact. It's bordered on the east and west by State-owned land and on the north and south by Service-managed land. The Service anticipates minimal restoration costs which would include allowing more tidal circulation in the ponds, to improve the food source and reduce the mosquito population. Once it's part of the refuge the property will also be considered for potential public hunting access.

An understandable concern of the county may be the possible loss of revenue from property taxes. As a federal agency the Service is prohibited from paying taxes. It does, however, make annual payments to counties under the authority of the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act (as amended, 1964). The Service follows the requirements of the Act and makes adjustments based upon revenue received during the past year to calculate payments to the counties based upon the appraised value of the Service's land holdings in each county throughout the country.

The Service is requesting funding for this purchase from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF). Service Regions around the country compete for this funding but because of the importance of this property the Director of the Service has approved this property for purchase. Our next step is to present the funding proposal to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission on June 23. In order to request funding from the MBCF the Service must receive approval from the Governor. This authority has been delegated to the Executive Director of California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC). To support our request for funding we must show that the counties where the land would be acquired also support the acquisition. We are now seeking the support of this county and of Napa County.

We are requesting that the Solano County Board of Supervisors (Board) add this request to their agenda for the board meeting on June 4. We hope that at that meeting the board will pass and sign a resolution in support of the proposed acquisition. The CFGC has requested that materials for their meeting on June 12 be submitted by May 30 but because of the holiday weekend should be willing to accept them up to June 5. It's for this reason that we hope to be able to obtain evidence of the county's support at its June 4 meeting. We appreciate the awkwardness this may create but hope that the Board will help us accommodate the Commission. We will do everything in our power to minimize any inconvenience to the Board.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Michael Borkoski, Realty Management Branch Chief at (916) 978-4693 or Michael_Borkoski@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Thomas Sampson
Realty Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pacific Southwest Region